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PP RUEHDE RUEHDH RUEHDIR
DE RUEHKU #0613/01 1731318
ZNY SSSSS ZZH
P 221318Z JUN 09
FM AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3513
INFO RUEHZM/GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 KUWAIT 000613

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NEA/ARP

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/14/2018
TAGS: [PTER](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [IR](#) [KDRG](#) [PHUM](#) [KU](#)
SUBJECT: KUWAIT'S NEW REHAB CENTER FOR FORMER GTMO
DETAINEES AND OTHER EXTREMISTS

REF: A. 08KUWAIT1022
[B. 08KUWAIT1188](#)
[C. 09KUWAIT105](#)
[D. 09KUWAIT110](#)
[E. 09KUWAIT502](#)

Classified By: Political Counselor Pete O'Donohue for reasons 1.4 b and
d

1.(S) SUMMARY. At the Embassy's request, a team of GOK officials from multiple ministries -- many just back from a "fact-finding" trip to Saudi Arabia's rehabilitation facilities for GTMO returnees and other former militant jihadists -- escorted Ambassador and staff through their proposed rehabilitation center, located in a refurbished wing of Kuwait's central prison. The GOK plans to detain, interrogate, and rehabilitate its four remaining GTMO detainees in this facility, asserting that based on the Saudi model, such rehabilitation can take place within a six month detention period that can be accommodated within existing Kuwaiti laws and state security procedures. The facility, where refurbishment began in May, will not be ready to accept inmates for at least another two months. Absent compelling physical evidence and new CT legislation, it is doubtful the GOK can successfully try and detain any of their four remaining GTMO prisoners beyond the six month rehabilitation period. END SUMMARY.

Origins

2.(S) On June 18, Ambassador visited Kuwait's new multi-story Rehabilitation Center for Radicals and was taken on a guided tour by the Ministry of Interior's Major General Musaed Al-Ghuwainim, who is Assistant Undersecretary for Correctional Institutions. The GOK began planning for the center in September 2008, following a discussion between Prime Minister Nasser Al-Sabah and former Secretary Rice in Washington on the possible role of such a center with respect to Kuwait's four remaining Guantanamo detainees (Ref A). GOK officials subsequently consulted Saudi Interior Ministry officials and ultimately based much of their present center on the Saudi rehabilitation model. There appears to have been little progress on the center throughout 2008 (Refs B, C, D), but during Secretary Clinton's April 2009 visit to Kuwait, Foreign Minister Mohammad Al-Sabah unexpectedly announced that Kuwait had arranged to place the four remaining GTMO detainees in a "clinic" within Kuwait's Central Prison (Ref E). At a follow-up meeting on April 29, 2009, an MFA official advised that the center was nearly complete and ready for official visits (Ref E).

3.(S) According to Al-Ghuwainim, who had just returned from a field visit to the Saudi facilities, in early 2009 the GOK formed a committee of representatives from ten ministries to oversee the construction and management of the new center,

including representatives from the Ministries of Interior, Social Affairs and Labor, Justice, Health, and Awqaf and Islamic Affairs. The board also included Dr. Khalid Al-Awda, the father of current Guantanamo detainee Fouzi Khalid Abdullah Al-Awda (ISN 232) and chairman of the Kuwaiti Guantanamo Detainees Families NGO. (Note: Al-Awda, an articulate and cordial interlocutor, was present throughout the Ambassador's visit. End note.) Al-Ghuwainim said the GOK began construction work on the center in May, creating it out of a disused branch of its Central Prison.

Rehab Program: the Saudi Model & Legal Constraints

4.(S) Al-Ghuwainim said that the center was designed after the Saudi model; its staff of fifty would include both moderate clerics and trained psychiatrists whose aim will be to return the detainees to an appreciation of moderate Islam and eventually to normal society. The Ministry of Health's Dr. Adnan Al-Shatti described to the Ambassador plans for a social reintegration program to be carried out by officials from his Ministry in collaboration with officials from the Ministries of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs and Social Affairs and Labor. Dr. Al-Shatti said that at the end of the program, he hopes to employ the "reformed" Guantanamo detainees as counselors for other apprehended extremists brought to the rehabilitation center, including any returned from Iraq or other conflict zones. To keep the former detainees rehabilitated, Dr. Al-Shatti plans on having them issued a monthly 750KD (\$2,600) payment and helping them to get married and settle down with a family. GTMO NGO chair

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Khalid Al-Awda asserted that of the previous eight GTMO detainees, seven had been fully reintegrated into Kuwaiti life; Ambassador remarked that the eighth was a notable exception (Al-Azmi, who blew himself up in Mosul).

5.(S) Ambassador noted her understanding that the GOK was constrained in its ability to compel these individuals to remain in rehab facilities or to detain them absent a judicial order, unlike in Saudi Arabia. Al-Ghuwainim responded that the GOK has the legal right to hold them for up to six months prior to any sentencing, through a sequencing of interrogations and related detentions, adding that Saudi officials had told him that -- in their experience -- most terrorists were "normalized" within six months of treatment. The rehabilitation of the detainees would be carried out simultaneously with the legal proceedings against them, so that by the end of the initial six month period Kuwaiti courts would be ready to sentence the detainees if necessary, according to Al-Ghuwainim. After serving these sentences, Al-Ghuwainim said, the former detainees would be released and monitored on a 24-hour basis, although Al-Ghuwainim did not provide specific details.

Comment

6.(S) There was little discernible movement on establishing a rehabilitation center in the months following the Prime Minister's commitment to former Secretary Rice (Ref A). However, the GOK appears to have been galvanized by the President's announced plans to close Guantanamo by the end of the year and by continuing domestic pressure on the GOK to bring their "boys" home. We are not in a position to compare Saudi rehab facilities/programs to those in Kuwait, but the GOK's large, newly-remodeled prison facility represents an impressive effort and could be ready to operate as a rehab center within a few months, as suggested. We are not experts, but with cords dangling from the air conditioning units and porcelain toilet fixtures which can be easily broken into shards, the rehab/detention facility does not appear to be constructed for high threat/dangerous prisoners.

The facility clearly was designed to promote a soft re-entry into Kuwaiti society, with plans for landscaping and a soccer field.

7.(S) A DOD team charged with defending Kuwaiti GTMO detainee Faiz Mohammed Ahmed Al-Kandari (ISN 552) visited Kuwait on June 8, 2009, and was given a tour of the rehab center in addition to meeting with MFA officials. (Note: Embassy was unaware of the team's activities in advance as they had coordinated country clearance with the OMC-K office at post without specifying their objectives. End note.) In a follow-on press conference, the team reportedly offered their assessment that their "clients" were innocent and there was insufficient evidence to prosecute. Dr. Al-Awda, father of one of those detainees, remarked to Ambassador following the visit that he was aware that release decisions were soon to be made. We understand that a decision may soon be made concerning at least two of the Kuwaiti detainees and that there has been consideration of releasing them to a third country. If the Kuwaitis believe they have addressed our criteria and met the Saudi standard for rehabilitation, they will respond angrily and publicly to any decision to send their "boys" elsewhere.

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